Considerations for Competitors and Electors of Representatives in Parliament.

TRUSTS are things, which all men agree, *nemine contradicente*, ought to be performed with all Faithfulness, and for that purpose with all the care and diligence, that the nature, importance or difficulty of the matter doth require. Hence it is that Honest men, who make Conscience of the due performance of their Obligations, are not easily perswaded into such Undertakings, unless where near Relation, intimate Friendship, great Charity upon some special advantage and need of their assistance doth move, and in some sort oblige them to it; much less are they apt to intrude into such Employments, or offer themselves, except where there is apparent need of their assistance, and upon due consideration of their own abilities to discharge what they undertake: And therefore when men are without any such special motives found to thrust themselves into such Imployments, or stand in competition with men as well, or better qualifyed for the business than themselves, this is generally looked upon as a just Cause of suspicion of some sinister Ends and Designs in them.

This being so in Private Trusts, Why is it not, or should it not be much more so in Publick, since they are of greater Importance? And yet it is not always in these? The reason is this: Of *Publick Offices* of Trust, some are also *Offices of Profit*, and reason good they should be so, being Offices of great Skill and Pains, and requiring the expence of living proportionable to the Dignity of the Office: And such as Providence hath left to get their Livings by their Labour, may reasonably desire such honest Imployments as they are duly qualifyed for. But in this there are usually great faults committed, as 1. When men, who are in a competent, decent, and convenient way of living, are not contented therewith, but Ambitiously aspiring, or Insatiably gaping, after greater and higher Matters: These are not, nor cannot be either compleat Christians, or truly good Men, and when the Tentation comes, do usually shew themselves. 2. When they seek such Places meerly for the Profit, and are not sufficiently qualifyed

duly to discharge the Office and Trust. 3. When by their Interest or Friends, they interpose to keep out better or fitter Men than themselves; in both which cases they do Prejudice to the Publick, and are Obstacles and Impediments to its Service.

Other Offices and Employments are of great Trust, Honour and Authority, but of little or no Profit, but rather occasion of Expense. These, I conceive, are neither to be sought for the Honour or Authority by any, nor to be refused for their trouble or expence, by such as are well qualifyed for them, when they are regularly called to that Service. But of all Publick Trusts in this Nation, there is none, taken singly, of greater weight and concern than that of Enquiring, Consulting and Acting, in Parliament; of which I shall speak a little more particularly, as to the Persons to be Chosen for Representatives of the Commons, and the Duty of the Electors. Each of these hath a double Trust reposed in him, the one by the Electors for the special good of the place for which he is chosen, the other by the Constitution of our Government for the good of the whole Nation, wherein the Religion, Lives, Liberties, Properties, and whole concern of all that is valuable is comprehended, and many times great concerns of other Nations also: And in this the Representative of the meanest Borough hath an equal share with a Knight of the largest County.

The *Qualifications of a Person* to be chosen for such a Service, ought to be proportionable and agreeable to the Extent and Weight of the Trust, which is to be reposed in him. As 1. *Integrity*, and such Integrity as is not to be mov'd by any prospect of Profit, Honour, or Fear of the Faces of Men. 2. *Knowledge* and good Understanding in that variety of Matters, which may occur, and are there to be consider'd, whether Ecclesiastical or Civil, the Principles of Laws and Government in general, and the Laws and Government of *England* in particular, and many other matters, with a good Sagacity, Prospect and Foresight, into the remote consequences of things. 3. *Diligence and Industry*, to attend and consider, and prepare and forward matters of Importance to the Publick. These are necessary, if not indispensable qualifications; to which may be added two others of great use, that is, 4. *Elocution*, so as to speak pertinently and closely to business, and 5. *Reputation* of Integrity and good Judgment which usually makes what is spoken by such a Person to

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be the more regarded by the reſt. Theſe five qualifications are as requiſite to a compleat Parliament Man, as are the five Senſes to a Compleat Man.

Such indeed are to be deſired, to be ſought for, to be preferred and choſen, where they may be had. But where perſons thus qualified in all particulars, and in the higheſt degree, are not to be had, in ſuch caſe they that come neareſt are to be choſen, eſpecially at ſuch times when matters of great moment and concern are to be ordered. This is plain and evident, becauſe the End, which all men in ſuch caſes are by the Laws of God and Nature obliged to intend, is the publick Good, and by conſequence are likewiſe obliged to make choice of the moſt juſt and proper means and Inſtruments for the attaining of that End; and ſuch only are thoſe who have moſt of the principal qualificationsaforeſaid, and in the higheſt degree.

And by this Rule may all ſuch, both Competitors and Electors, who are moro concerned to diſcharge their Duty and ſerve their Country, than to gratify their Ambition or ſerve a private intereſt, eaſily direct their Actions, and judge of the actions of others. And therefore 1. for Competitors, whoever, becauſe of his Quality, his Eſtate and Ability to ſpend moſt Money, or his intereſt among his neighbours upon any other ſcore than the qualifications aforeſaid, ſhall oppoſe another better qualifyed in thoſe reſpects for this purpoſe than himſelf, does certainly either Act upon miſtaken Principles, or is tranſported with a vain Ambition, or has not that Affection for his Country, and Senſe of his Duty, as he ought to have. And this may be further demonſtrated from a familiar Inſtance, for there is no Wiſe and Conſiderate Man, but in his private matters of Law, in matters relating to his Health, in matters of Dealings with other Men, and the like, will ſeek aſſiſtance from ſuch as are of more Ability in thoſe reſpects than himſelf; and therefore in matters of greateſt moment to himſelf to his Poſterity, and whole Country, not to do the like, is inconſiſtent both with common Prudence, and that ſenſe of Duty, and of the weight of his undertaking, which every Honeſt man hath in the acceptance of but a private Truſt; and certainly mens ſo forward intruding into a Truſt of ſo great Importance, deſerves no other Conſtruction than it doth, and uſually hath, in the caſe of a Private Truſt, under the like Circumſtances.

By the ſame Rule alſo may the *Electors* as eaſily direct their choice,

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if they intend the Juſt and Honeſt diſcharge of their Duty; that is, if they regard only or principally the true and proper qualifications of the Perſon for the buſineſs for which he is to be choſen, and lay aſide all by reſpects and private concerns. Some men pretend that a good *Eſtate* is a neceſſary, or principal qualification, to oblige the perſon to be the more concern'd for ſo conſiderable an Intereſt, but that is but a meer Fallacy; for a Covetous or Ambitious Man will be apt to uſe that as a ſtep to Sacrifice the Intereſt of his Country, to the ſatisfaction of his Humour, which ſoever it is, whereas an honeſt man contented with his condition, will be no leſs careful to preſerve the little he hath, than he that hath more. Others are carried on upon the conſideration of *Friendſhip*, which is as unreaſonable as if a man inſtead of an able Lawyer or Phyſician, ſhould make choice of a perſon but meanly Skilled in either of thoſe Sciences becauſe he is his Friend: and as abſurd and unreaſonable it is for any man to take it ill from his Friend, who chooſeth the aſſiſtance of a more proper Man in a ſpecial caſe than himſelf. The firſt of theſe does plainly preſer his private Friendſhip before the publick good of his Country, and the latter his own Intereſt or humour before either. A like miſtake is very common in Cities and Boroughs, where they think themſelves obliged to chooſe their actual or expected *Benefactors*, and they again expect to be choſen. Of theſe we may judge by what is ſaid of the laſt. In the Country many are ſwayed by *Fear of the diſpleaſure* of their Landlords or great Neighbours, and they as unreaſonably expect their compliance. The former do in a matter of greater importance, the choice of Truſtees for their Country, what they would not do in a leſs, the choice of Truſtees for a ſmall Eſtate of their own: And the latter take from their Neighbours that Freedom, which they would not have taken from themſelves; or having baſely given up their own, would injuriouſly Uſurp their Neighbours Right, as hath often been the caſe of late times. For *that Rabble* of Brutes who are ready to Sacrifice all to their Bellies, they are ſcarce capable of hearing Reaſon, *Venter non habit aures*, but if any of them have ſo much humanity left as to liſten to it, the Rule before expreſſed may direct them.

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